



February 4, 2013

Testimony for:

Connecticut General Assembly
Transportation Committee
Public Hearing
Monday, February 4, 2013
10:00 AM Room 1E of the LOB

Provided by:

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Honorable Members of the Transportation Committee:

This testimony is regarding two proposed bills concerning funding for the provision of transportation services under the *State Matching Grant Program for Municipalities for Demand-Responsive Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities*, pursuant to Section 13b-38bb of the General Statutes.

Proposed S.B. No. 225 AN ACT CONCERNING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE DIAL-A-RIDE PROGRAM.

Proposed S.B. No. 646 AN ACT RESTORING FUNDING FOR THE STATE MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FOR DEMAND-RESPONSIVE TRANSPORTATION FOR ELDERLY PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

Greater Bridgeport Transit (GBT) has been providing transportation service to senior citizens and riders with disabilities throughout the Bridgeport region under the State Matching Grant Program since it began. GBT has been asked by the City of Bridgeport and the Towns of Fairfield and Trumbull to manage the program, coordinating it with transportation services provided by GBT under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

This program has allowed many of the region's seniors to travel places they would otherwise be unable to reach. It has been used for medical and physical therapy appointments, visits

to aging and ill relatives, day-to-day activities like banking and grocery shopping and other community events.

Through the program, it has been possible to provide service to locations outside of the traditional ADA service area and to provide new special transportation programs. Recently, a new weekend grocery shuttle was established in Bridgeport's East End/East Side (an area with no shopping venues beyond local convenience stores) that has enabled seniors in these neighborhoods to reach full service grocery stores in other neighborhoods that they otherwise would have difficulty accessing. In Trumbull, a new demand response service is being developed for Stern Village, a home to many seniors and people with disabilities, which will connect them with GBT fixed route services and local businesses.

Between fiscal year 2008 and today, more than 68,000 door-to-door trips have been provided to hundreds of seniors in the region and the demand for the service is growing. It is noteworthy that, because the trips are coordinated and tend to be performed in groups, services under this program are extraordinarily efficient. During the first quarter of this year, productivity in the Bridgeport service was 14.5 trips per hour of service with a cost of \$3.72 per trip. It is also important to know that State investment in this program is matched (50/50) through continuing municipal contributions and has always included maintenance of effort in funding from each municipality. This has resulted in the creation of new and expanded services covering new geographic locations and service spans.

Services under this program are enormously beneficial to seniors and riders with disabilities. Reductions in the available funding have led to reduced service hours for the program and any further reduction in operating investment in this program would lead to further reductions and the loss of access to important community services for many.

The restoration of funding to the original \$5M state wide would allow GBT and agencies, cities and towns to continue to meet the growing need for mobility services for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important program.

